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University Provost Leonard Ferrari Outlines State of NPS During Latest SGL

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Article By: Amanda D. Stein

Naval Postgraduate School Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. Leonard Ferrari presented the State of NPS address to students, staff and faculty on Jan. 18 as part of the Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL) series. Ferrari offered a brief overview of some of NPS' noteworthy departments, projects, and faculty accomplishments from 2010. As exciting as the past achievements have been, he noted, there is only more to come for 2011.

"The primary reason I wanted to give this talk to the student body is because we do consider the students to be our colleagues," explained Ferrari. "We consider them in every way our partners in trying to help the Department of Defense and the national security of the United States. There are 700 projects at the Naval Postgraduate School ... I covered some that I think are interesting, growing and have good support around the nation."

As an institution known as the nation's premier national security research institution, Ferrari explained, NPS offers an entirely unique learning environment, rich with research opportunities that directly impact the Navy. Some examples that he gave included small satellites being developed in the Space Systems Academic Group under the direction of Jim Newman, research in modeling ice melt in the Arctic Ocean, and the advancement of weather processing capabilities.

"We teach, we do research, we provide operational support, and we serve the nation," explained Ferrari. "I hope this talk will give you a better understanding of NPS and sufficient reason to keep in touch with us."

Ferrari recalled some distinguished alumni who once walked the halls of NPS, offering their commitment as examples of lasting relationships that have been forged on campus. He noted that many graduates, such as Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and King Abdullah of Jordan, hold senior leadership positions in the U.S. and around the world. Their support enables NPS to maintain a broad network of partners, to help strengthen the academic programs.

Partnerships are critical to the success of the Defense Department, Ferrari noted, as President Obama and Secretary of the Navy Mabus have expressed numerous times when discussing national security. One way in which NPS does that is by welcoming international students from over 50 nations to study in Monterey each year.

Their experiences and cultures enrich the diversity of the NPS community while providing international military leaders with a defense-based education that they can implement in their own countries to promote national and global security.

"I like to think of us not only as a defense and national security institution, but also an international security institution," said Ferrari.

In addition to the 250 international students studying on campus, NPS is committed to expanding the student body to include wounded warriors, Ferrari noted. Although restrictions are stringent on civilians studying at a military institution, NPS currently has many DoD civilians and contractors attending class, many through the Distributed Learning courses.

"Our greatest asset is definitely our students," said Ferrari. "And I say that not because you outnumber me terribly in this audience, but because I haven't been at an institution where faculty consider students to be colleagues. You truly are colleagues to our faculty. You bring so much to the table. So much more than in civilian universities, and I am speaking from 35 years of experience in civilian universities."

Before assuming his current role in 2006, Ferrari joined NPS as the Dean of Research in 2003. Under his direction, the Strategic Plan initiative was developed to provide a rigorous look at both the past and future of NPS. He also initiated collaboration with other research and educational institutions to strengthen and expand NPS programs.



Dr. Leonard Ferrari, NPS Executive Vice President and Provost, offers the State of NPS address to students, staff and faculty on Jan. 18 in King Hall. He spoke of the School's achievements in 2010 and expressed hope for 2011. (U.S. Navy photo by Javier Chagoya/ Released)